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Message Text

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47
ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

OMB-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

SAM-01 DRC-01 /094 W
---------- 101967
O R 201000Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1568
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT CAIRO
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0978

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: BREAKTHROUGH TOWARD FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT

REF: TEL AVIV 969

1. PROSPECTS FOR RE-CONSTITUTION OF OUTGOING COALITION OF LABOR ALIGNMENT, NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP), AND INDEPENDENT LIBERALS (ILP) HAVE REVIVED DRAMATICALLY IN LAST 18 HOURS, AND GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT MRS MEIR WILL INFORM PRESIDENT KATZIR THIS AFTERNOON THAT NEGOTIATIONS HAVE REACHED STAGE WHERE SHE BELIEVES SHE CAN FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. EXPECTED SCENARIO IS THAT KATZIR ON HIS OWN WILL GIVE MRS MEIR SEVERAL MORE DAYS TO COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT HER ASKING FOR FORMAL RENEWAL OF HER MANDATE (AS PRESCRIBED BY LAW) FOR ADDITIONAL THREE-WEEK PERIOD.

2. IN THREE-HOUR NEGOTIATING SESSION LATE YESTERDAY BETWEEN LABOR ALIGNMENT AND NRP, SAPIR ANNOUNCED THAT MRS MEIR
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AGREED TO NRP DEMAND ON FUTURE OF WEST BANK, AND THAT

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WRITTEN COALITION CHARTER WOULD SPECIFICALLY SAY THAT GOI WOULD TAKE NO DECISIONS REGARDING DISPOSITION OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA WITHOUT CALLING NEW ELECTION. AS REGARDS PROPOSED COMPROMISE FORMULA ON WHO IS A JEW, PROVIDING FOR ESTAB-LISHMENT OF MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE TO DRAFT NEW LEGISLATION ON RELIGIOUS CONVERSIONS WITHIN A YEAR, ASSUMPTION IS THAT RABBINICAL COUNCIL MEETING TODAY WILL AUTHORIZE NRP TO ACCEPT IT AS BASIS FOR ENTERING NEW GOVERNMENT.

3. NRP AND ILP NEGOTIATORS ARE MEETING SEPARATELY TODAY TO ADOPT FINAL POSITION ON ALL OUTSTANDING ISSUES. NRP MINIUTERS WERE PREPARED YESTERDAY TO ISSUE STATEMENT INDICATING NRP READINESS TO ENTER NEW COALITION BUT WERE STOPPED BY YOUTH GROUP DEMAND THAT CHIEF RABBIS FIRST GIVE THEIR VIEWS ON WHO IS A JEW COMPROMISE. NRP AGREEMENT TO JOIN COALITION SEEMS VIRTUALLY ASSURED AS OF NOW. PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN THINK INDEPENDENT LIBERALS WILL ALSO ADHERE TO COALITION AGREEMENT, EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD SEEM TO INVOLVE A CONCESSION OF ILP PRINCIPLE EVEN TO AGREE TO DISCUSSION OF NEW LEGISLATION ON RELIGIOUS CONVERSION.

4. SUBSTANCE OF COMPROMISES AT PRESENT SEEMS LESS IMPORTANT THAN NEWLY-FOUND POLITICAL WILL TO PROCEED WITH RE-CONSTITUTION OF OUTGOING GOVERNMENT. IN CHARGED POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE (SOME OF WHICH MY HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATED BY MAIN LABOR ALIGNMENT PARTICIPANTS OR AT LEAST BY DAYAN--SEPTEL), PRESSURE FOR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS REACHED ITS ZENITH LAST NIGHT. IN COURSE OF DAY, MRS NEIR TOLD NRP THAT SHE WOULD NOT ASK PRESIDENT KATZIR FOR EXTENSION OF HER NEGOTIATING MANDATE, AND DAYAN ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION NOT TO BE A MINISTER IN NEXT GOVERN-MENT "UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES." BOMBSHELL IMPACT OF THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TO FORCE COALITION PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS ON WHERE THEY STOOD. MRS MEIR, IN ADDRESSING ZIONIST GENERAL COUNCIL LAST NIGHT, GAVE STRONG IMPRESSION OF HAVING EVERY INTENTION TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE AS LEADER OF TRIPARTITE COALITION. THIS WAS UNDERLINED BY HER STRONG REJECTION AGAIN LAST EVENING OF NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL, WHICH (ACCORDING CONFIDENTIAL

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TO NEWS MEDIA) SHE DESCRIBED AS INCOMPATIBLE WITH ISRAEL'S ASPIRATION TO PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. WE EXPECT THAT OUTLINE OF COALITION AGREEMENT SHOULD BE CLEAR BY THIS EVENING, ALTHOUGH ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS AND RATIFICATION BY APPROPRIATE PARTY BODIES IS LIKELY TO EXTEND PROCESS INTO EARLY NEXT WEEK.
KEATING

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